

**TOWN OF WELLESLEY
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 6, 2014, 7:30 PM
NRC Office, Lower Level, Town Hall**

Approved 2/24/14

Attending: Heidi Gross, Chair, Stephen Murphy, Vice Chair, Neal Seaborn, Dr. Sarah Little, Joan Gaughan, Janet Hartke Bowser, NRC Director.

Guests: Lucy Kapples, Advisory Committee Liaison to the NRC

Public Voice

No one attending the meeting spoke at Public Voice.

Review/Approval of NRC FY15 Operating Budget Requests to Advisory

Document Reviewed for this Discussion:

- NRC FY15 Operating Budget as prepared by NRC Director Janet Hartke Bowser.

The NRC reviewed the FY15 Operating Budget prepared by Ms. Bowser, who stated that in an effort to be as efficient and fiscally conservative as possible, the department has made every effort to develop an operating budget that meets both the Advisory Committee's guidelines and the Department's needs. The NRC's operating expense request includes a 0% increase that meets Advisory's FY15 guidelines. The NRC discussed its FY15 priorities that will include continuing to work with FBPCC on the implementation of the Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project, which is nearing completion of the project's Phase 3 Final Design and Permitting. This phase of the project was funded through the Community Preservation Act and funding for the final implementation phase will be requested at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting. In addition, the NRC will continue to implement improvements at Morses Pond in accordance with the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan including the continued installation of Low Impact Development projects on both public and private properties to protect the Town's watersheds. The NRC will also continue to make needed improvements to the Town's ponds, parks, playgrounds, and playing fields. With the DPW, the NRC will continue to maintain the Town's small ponds, and will encourage the public to reduce pesticide and fertilizer use in order to protect the Town's water supply and natural resources. The NRC will continue to work with the Town's neighborhoods to enhance open space and parkland while protecting wetlands. The Wetlands Protection Committee will continue to work on revisions to strengthen the wetland protection regulations. The Trails Committee will continue to promote the use of the Town's trail system. The NRC will continue to work with the DPW to replace public shade trees and improve the maintenance of the Town's parks and playing fields.

Ms. Gaughan reported that the Trails Committee's request to the CPC for \$1,000 to fund initial sketches and a cost estimate for a pedestrian bridge over the Charles River connecting the Waban Arches to the DCR's Elm Bank Reservation was not approved since the CPC felt that additional detailed information and written statements of support are needed from the landowners (Wellesley College, Hunnewell Family, and Mass. Dept. of Conservation and Recreation). As a result, Ms. Gaughan stated that it was her understanding that the Trails Committee will not be asking for the \$1,000 for this project at this time and will work on further developing the project and will request CPC funding next fiscal year. **After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded and the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the NRC FY15 Operating Budget as presented.**

Review/Approval of Morses Pond Management Program FY15 Operating Budget Request

Document Reviewed for this Discussion:

- Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Request as prepared by NRC Director Janet Hartke Bowser.

Ms. Bowser reviewed with the NRC the Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Request and indicated that all operating costs are level funded except for a \$7,000 increase for the Phosphorus Activation Unit chemicals. This increase is due to the use of a new, more effective inactivation chemical as recommended by Morses Pond Manager Dr. Ken Wagner. **After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded and the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Request as presented.**

New Business/Continuing Business/Liaison Reports

Update on New Trails Committee Charter and Operational Guidelines

The Trails Committee indicated that they need more time to review the Charter and Guidelines. It is anticipated that Trails will submit comments to the NRC after their January 7, 2014 meeting.

Update on Fuller Brook Park Tree Work

Mr. Seaborn and Ms. Gross updated the NRC on the status of this tree work and stated that they will be meeting with Mike Quinn and Kent Warren of the DPW to review the next phase of this effort.

Update on Hunnewell Field Track and Field Improvement Project

Mr. Murphy and Ms. Bowser reviewed with the NRC the current status of this project. Ms. Bowser voiced some concern that the Task Force's Dec. 4, 2013 Meeting Minutes did not accurately reflect the NRC's position on the change in use related to this project as discussed at their Nov. 19, 2013 meeting with Task Force members.

The NRC discussed and reconfirmed its position as discussed with the Task Force representatives on Nov. 19, 2014 that if light conduits are to be included in the present phase, but the decision on the actual lighting is to be deferred to a later phase or stage (if it is at all), then the process for obtaining the approval of the NRC for the proposed change in use of the land would need to address that circumstance in an appropriate manner. That might mean that the approval to the change in use at that phase would not include in its scope any installation or any use of lights, and that any future installation or use of lights would require further approval as a further change in use in itself or as a "carve-out" from the approval process for the applicable project phase. Nonetheless, the issue of field lights would need to be addressed and not neglected in that process so as to avoid any possibility or any future dispute over the possibility that lights were approved by implication in the process for the first phase. Mr. Murphy stated that he will send an email to the Task Force prior to its meeting on Jan. 8th to clarify the NRC's position.

Director's Report

Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project Phase 3 Update

Ms. Gross, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Bowser updated the NRC on the status of the project. Ms. Bowser reported that Phase 4 construction bids will be opened on Feb. 12th and BETA is expected to complete their bid evaluation and make a recommendation by Feb. 21st. The current Phase 4 construction estimate is \$5.4 million including project management costs and a contingency of 12%. Ms. Bowser reported that the FBPCC's request for additional funds of \$35,000 was approved at the Dec. 9th Special Town Meeting.

NRC 2013 Year-in-Review – Major Accomplishments, Recognitions and Awards

Ms. Bowser reviewed with the NRC its FY13 major accomplishments, recognitions and awards and noted the importance of acknowledging the impressive and ambitious achievements from the past year. Ms. Bowser stated that in FY13 the NRC secured continued funding and provided oversight of the Town's Public Shade Tree Management Program and Wellesley received its 30th consecutive Tree City USA and Growth Awards in 2013, the longest of any municipality in Massachusetts. In 2013, the NRC successfully secured a conservation restriction at 27 Washington Street that protects extensive open space and wildlife habitat and provided oversight for Town-wide trail network improvements. In partnership with the DPW, the NRC continued to implement its Pond Restoration Master Plan and Playground Improvement Master Plan. Additionally, the NRC's program to reduce the use of pesticides continues to be recognized by the State as the leading municipal pesticide use reduction and education effort in Massachusetts.

Ms. Bowser noted that the NRC's FY13 accomplishments included:

- Fuller Brook Park Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Secured Open Space Conservation Restriction Abutting Charles River at 27 Washington Street
- Acquisition of 3 Seaver Street Open Space Parcels Abutting Fuller Brook Park
- Tree City USA Award – 30th Year in a Row – longest of any Mass. Municipality
- Installation of and Educational Event on Rain Garden/Low Impact Development Project at Town Hall Duck Pond
- On-going Implementation of Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Program (7th year of program)
- Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project – Phase 3 Final Design and Permitting Effort with FBPCC
- Fuller Brook Park Tree Removal Project
- Extensive Public Education & Outreach Efforts – Website, Quarterly E-Newsletters, Green Wellesley Campaign and Facebook page
- Extensive Inter-Board Collaboration on a wide range of Town Projects including:
 - * High School Building Project and Interim/Permanent Parking Accommodations
 - * Open Space Acquisition Efforts with Board of Selectmen
 - * High School Stadium Task Force Efforts to Improve Hunnewell Track and Field

Sustainable Wellesley Request for NRC Support for Town Holiday Sustainable Lighting Initiative

Ms. Bowser stated that she received a recent email from Lise Olney from Sustainable Wellesley requesting the NRC's support for a Town Holiday Sustainable Lighting Initiative. Ms. Bowser noted that the Town of Wellesley is taking the lead in celebrating more sustainably this holiday season by changing Town decorative lighting to LEDs and turning off tree lighting and Town Hall decorations by 11 pm. Sustainable Wellesley is reaching out to Wellesley residents and businesses to encourage them to do the same: convert to LED holiday lights and turn off exterior decorative lights by 11 pm. By turning off exterior decorative lights by 11 pm, residents and businesses will be reducing energy use *and* reducing light pollution. The glare from exterior lighting has a negative effect on many forms of wildlife. Sustainable Wellesley is asking the NRC to join them in promoting this initiative by sharing the distributed flyer with our network and social media connections and encouraging them to take action. **After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded and the NRC voted 5-0 to support Sustainable Wellesley's Request for NRC Support for the Town Holiday Sustainable Lighting Initiative.** Ms. Bowser will distribute information on this initiative to the NRC's support network.

Wellesley Green Collaborative Meeting – Jan. 22nd at 9:15 AM, Library

Ms. Bowser stated that she will attend this meeting and encouraged all NRC members to attend as well.

Fuller Brook Park Land Manager Job Description

The NRC reviewed and discussed the draft job description prepared by Ms. Bowser for this position that was first referenced in the “Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project Park Maintenance and Management Plan.” Mr. Seaborn and Ms. Gross submitted revisions and the NRC reviewed a revised draft of the position. Ms. Bowser will forward a copy of the revised draft job description to the FBPCC as requested.

Update on Perrin Park Playground Equipment Fundraising Effort

Ms. Bowser stated that the NRC has reached its fundraising goal for this project and stated that she’ll work with the DPW to order the new equipment and installation is anticipated in late spring or early summer.

NRC Environmental Education Film Series – “Simple Steps to a Greener Home” on Feb. 25th

Ms. Bowser stated that she and the NRC’s Environmental Education Coordinator, Laura Kiesel are organizing an environmental film series as part of the NRC’s Green Wellesley Campaign’s effort to inform Wellesley citizens about aspects of sustainable living, climate change, and toxins, as well as engage them in making small but significant changes in their daily lives. The first film will be “Simple Steps to a Greener Home” that will lead viewers through some easy steps to a greener home and is scheduled on Tuesday, Feb. 25th from 1 – 2:30 pm in the Wakelin Room at the library. Hosted by environmental lifestyle expert Danny Seo, the film explores ways to remodel and accentuate a home, including flooring, carpeting, and renewable energy options. The film will be followed by a brief discussion by NRC board member Dr. Sarah Little, who will offer simple step-by-step green cleaning recipes for your home and a Q & A session. The NRC’s Green Wellesley Campaign advocates for the protection of our environment and promotes sustainability by raising awareness and increased action. Ms. Bowser stated that the film series will be held bi-monthly and the three Additional films to be shown are “Six Degrees that Could Change the World,” “A Tour of Selected National Parks” and “Bag It.” The NRC members voiced their support for this educational effort.

Preparation for NRC/Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Presentation to Advisory Committee

Ms. Bowser stated that she and Ms. Gross will make this presentation to the Advisory Committee on February 5, 2014 and all members are encouraged to attend. Ms. Bowser will draft a cover memo to accompany the NRC and Morses Pond Operating Budget Requests and stated it will include the following information:

NRC’s Efforts to Improve Efficiency and Service

The NRC is committed to providing the highest level of service to the Town. The NRC Department averages over 120 citizen inquiries per week and the NRC staff assists citizens with a wide range of issues concerning the use and improvement of the Town’s parks, forests, conservation and recreational land, acquisition and protection of open space, public shade tree regulations, wetlands protection requirements, toxics and pesticide reduction and encroachment corrections. In an effort to improve service and efficiency, the NRC has developed an extensive website that includes the agendas, meeting minutes, goals, priorities and projects of the NRC. This website also contains permit application forms and extensive information on the Town’s recreational and natural resources including the Town’s trail system, as well as information on pesticide use reduction.

Wetlands Protection Enforcement Actions Update

Ms. Bowser provided an update on current Wetlands Protection enforcement actions that she is working on with the Wetlands Protection Committee.

NRC Winter Green Wellesley Campaign E-Newsletter Publication

Ms. Bowser stated that she is working with the NRC's Environmental Education Coordinator on the winter newsletter and asked NRC members to forward any ideas or article they would like to see included.

Morses Pond Management and Program Implementation December 4, 2013 Meeting

Ms. Bowser updated the NRC regarding this meeting that was attended by members from the NRC, DPW, Recreation and Friends of Morses Pond. At the meeting, Morses Pond Manager Dr. Ken Wagner reviewed the FY13 Annual Pond Report and reviewed the pond management schedule for this year.

Review and Approval of November 19, 2013 NRC Meeting Minutes

After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the November 19, 2013 Meeting Minutes as written.

Next Scheduled NRC Meeting and February Meeting Date Change

The next NRC Meeting was scheduled for December 17, 2013 at 7:30 PM in the NRC Office.

Ms. Gaughan requested that the February NRC meeting be moved to the 13th to avoid school vacation week, and all members supported this date change.

Adjournment

After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Hartke Bowser

Janet Hartke Bowser
NRC Director